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ABSTRACT

This document presents the revised guidelines for staff development in Mississippi, as mandated by the Education Reform Act of 1982, produced by the State Department of Education in consultation with various state-appointed commissions and 16 school districts that participated in a pilot testing program. These guidelines are to be used by all school districts in Mississippi for designing, developing, and implementing a comprehensive staff development program or modifying, if necessary, an ongoing staff development program. The document begins with a citation of pertinent state law from the 1983 Supplement of the Mississippi Code, followed by an explanatory preface. Thereafter, guidelines are provided for the following areas: definition of staff development, process of approval, funding, basic requirements, and criteria for reviewing plans. These criteria include: (1) goals and objectives, (2) assessment of needs, (3) collaborative structures, (4) staff reward system, (5) program implementation strategies (including staff training and staff support activities), (6) administrative support, (7) successful completion criteria, (8) program evaluation strategies, and (9) program review and revision. The guidelines conclude with a note on the amendment process. (TE)

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37-3-2. Commission on teacher and administrator education, certification and development; membership; powers and duties.

(12) Each district shall develop a plan to provide in-service training for beginning teachers. This plan shall include means of addressing needs for improvement that are determined through the evaluation of on-the-job performance. Cooperative and third party arrangements may be used in these plans. Each district shall have a plan approved by the State Board of Education and in effect by school year 1986-87. The State Board of Education may delegate the approval of these plans to the committee if it so desires.

(14) As part of the rules and criteria for the renewal of teacher certificates in all fields, there shall be established a procedure whereby after July 1, 1984, every certified teacher shall be required to successfully complete the prescribed in-service training staff development plan approved by the Commission on School Accreditation as provided in section 37-17-8, Mississippi Code of 1972. This plan shall include means of addressing needs for improvement that are determined through the evaluation of on-the-job performance.

37-3-4. School executive management institute; personnel; advisory board; per diem and expenses.

(2) It shall be the purpose and duty of the institute to conduct thorough empirical studies and analyses of the school management needs of the local school districts throughout the state, to make recommendations to the State Board of Education regarding standards and programs of training that aid in the development of administrative and management skills of local school administrators, and to conduct such programs related to these purposes as they are implemented under guidelines established by the State Board of Education.

(3) The State Board of Education shall develop and implement through the School Executive Management Institute a program for the development of administrative and management skills of local school administrators under which all local school administrators shall be required to participate.

37-17-6. Establishment and implementation of permanent performance based accreditation systems; creation of performance-based school assessment task force.

(4) It shall be the duty of the task force to undertake a study and to propose to establish guidelines and criteria for a performance-based school accreditation system . . . such a study and plan should take into account, but not necessarily be limited to, the following factors relating to performance-based school accreditation.

(a) The role and behavior of the school principal;
(b) The amount of time given to instruction (hours per day and days per year), especially in fundamentals;
(c) The availability and quality of preschool programs and the levels of preparedness of children who have been in those programs;
(d) School-wide student discipline practices and policies;

(e) The emphasis placed on acquisition of basic skills;
(f) The committment to bringing all children to a minimum level of achievement;
(g) The nature and quality of feedback given to students about their level of performance and the amount of reinforcement given to learning;
(h) Teacher preparedness as reflected in lesson plans, learning objectives, assessment criteria, and materials;
(i) Classroom decorum, discipline and management;
(j) The use of mastery learning techniques, direct instruction and active teaching in each classroom;
(k) The amount of time on task in all learning situations, and methods of assessing time on task as a measure of teacher effectiveness;
(l) The availability and use of diagnostic measurements in grade placement, assessment of a need for compensatory work or remediation, and academic achievement;
(m) The proper sequencing of subject matter from class to class and grade level to grade level;
(n) The coordination of curriculum throughout the system so that teachers know what has been taught in previous grades and what will be taught in subsequent grades.

37-21-7. Early Childhood Education Grant-in-Aid Program; Reading Improvement Program.

(2)(c) In order to receive funding, each school district shall:

1. Submit a plan on the implementation of a reading improvement program to the State Department of Education; and
2. Develop a plan of educational accountability and assessment of performance for reading in grades one through six.

Additionally, each school district shall:

1. Implement an annual orientation session emphasizing program goals;
2. Hold periodic workshops for teachers on the effective use of assistant reading instructors;
3. Provide training annually on specific instructional skills for assistant reading instructors;
4. Annually evaluate their program in accordance with their educational accountability and assessment of performance plan, and
5. Designate the necessary personnel to supervise and report on their program.

The State Department of Education shall:

1. Develop and assist in the implementation of a statewide uniform training program for teachers and assistant reading instructors;
2. Annually evaluate the program through the use of an acceptable standardized testing system; and
3. Promulgate rules, regulations and such other standards deemed necessary to effectuate the purpose of this subsection.

37-17-8. In-service staff development plans; funds; reports by school districts.

Note: 37-17-8 provides the enabling mechanism for successful implementation of all requirements for staff development contained in the Act.

The State Board of Education shall, through the Commission on School Accreditation, establish criteria for comprehensive in-service staff development plans. These criteria shall: (a) include, but not be limited to, formula and guidelines for allowing state funds for in-service training to local school districts which have an approved plan; (b) provide that such funds may not be allocated to local school districts which do not have approved plans; and (c) require that a certain portion of the funds allocated pursuant to an approved plan be used exclusively for the purpose of providing staff development training of beginning teachers within that local school district and for no other purpose. The board shall each year make recommendations to the legislature concerning the amount of funds which will be appropriated for this purpose.

Beginning in school year 1984-85, and each school year thereafter, every district shall submit to the Commission on School Accreditation for its approval a comprehensive in-service training staff development plan to be used in that school district. Before the plan is submitted to the Commission the plan shall have been prepared by a district committee appointed by the district superintendent and consisting of teachers, administrators, school board members, and lay people, and it shall have been approved by the district superintendent.

From: 1983 Supplement of Mississippi Code: Laws Enacted by the Legislature, Extraordinary Session - 1982, Regular Session - 1983, pages 40-41, 42-43, 79-80, 82, 92.

PREFACE

The Education Reform Act of 1982 mandates sweeping changes in the focus and process of elementary and secondary education in Mississippi. School districts are required by the Act to evaluate all components of their educational systems in terms of contributions made to the improvement of the planned program of instruction. Further, school personnel will learn new behaviors and skills as well as new and more effective patterns of operating their programs. Educational reform in Mississippi will involve school districts in establishing specific long range goals for improving performance, in documenting the means by which these goals are achieved, and in monitoring and reporting on the progress made toward achieving the established goals. Successfully implementing these changes in elementary and secondary school programs will require the collaborative and collective efforts of all school district personnel, and a mechanism is provided in the Act to trigger this action. The mechanism is staff development.

Viewed as an integral, continuous process within school districts, staff development is intended to be the means by which school improvement is accomplished. It touches and affects all personnel responsible for any part of a school district's system of education including paraprofessionals, beginning and career teachers, novice and veteran administrators and supervisors, and ultimately, members of local boards of trustees.

The Commission on Teacher and Administrator Education, Certification and Development and the Performance-Based School Assessment Task Force were created by the Education Reform Act to study and recommend revisions of the state's certification and accreditation systems. The original guidelines were based on the collaborative thinking of these two groups, the definition and rationale in the preceding paragraph, and the reference to staff development found in the law.

During the 1984-85 school year, 16 school districts, including public and non-public schools, participated in pilot testing the staff development guidelines. Contained herein are the revised guidelines which are based on the year of pilot testing and extensive input from schools and school districts in Mississippi. These guidelines are to be used by all school districts in designing, developing and implementing a comprehensive staff development program or modifying, if necessary, an ongoing staff development program.

STAFF DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES

DEFINITION OF STAFF DEVELOPMENT

Staff development is defined as a mandatory program of activities which is initiated by the school district, based on identified institutional needs, and designed to promote continued demonstration of the essential competencies and responsibilities necessary for the school district to meet its goals.

PROCESS OF APPROVAL

All staff development plans shall be approved by the Commission on School Accreditation. The staff development plan of each school district is to be submitted to the Commission on School Accreditation through the Bureau of School Improvement in the State Department of Education. Beginning with school year 1985-86, the plan shall be submitted to that Bureau annually on or before the third Monday in June. A committee appointed by the Director of the Bureau of School Improvement will approve or disapprove the staff development plan on the basis of the criteria contained in these guidelines and will notify school districts of its approval or disapproval of the plan within 45 working days upon receipt of the plan.

The Commission on School Accreditation will periodically issue information describing the process for approval of comprehensive staff development plans and also will coordinate assistance in development, implementation, and evaluation of staff development plans and programs.

Those districts without approved staff development plans may receive technical and specific assistance coordinated by the State Department of Education to help them prepare and execute staff development plans which meet the criteria.

FUNDING

Each year the State Department of Education will request state funds to be issued to districts with approved staff development and Assistant Teacher Program applications. If the State Department of Education requests are funded, school districts will be notified of the amount of staff development funding to which they are entitled when their staff development plans are approved. Each district's allocation of staff development funds will be based upon the district's number of teacher units from the previous school year and the amount per teacher unit appropriated by the Legislature. State funds released for teacher units which are staffed by beginning teachers must be used to provide staff development activities for these beginning teachers.

Staff development activities for the Assistant Teacher Program are funded separately. School districts will receive funds upon approval of the staff development plan and receipt of the district Assistant Teacher Program application.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS

1. The staff development plan shall be comprehensive in nature, reflecting all components of the staff development program, to include goals and objectives

which are based on an assessment of district needs, a staff reward system, strategies for implementation including training and support activities, administrative support strategies, and strategies for evaluation and revision.

2. The plan shall assure that all personnel employed by a local school district are to be involved in staff development activities:

   Certified personnel and assistant teachers shall be involved in staff development activities on an annual basis. All other personnel shall be involved in staff development activities as district needs arise, but shall accrue a minimum of 15 credits over a five year period.

3. The staff development plan shall be prepared by a district-wide committee appointed by the superintendent. The committee shall consist of teachers, administrators, school board members, and lay people. The superintendent and the board of trustees shall approve the plan before it is submitted to the Commission on School Accreditation.

   In the absence of other planned and approved mechanisms for documenting the work of the district staff development committee, minutes of the meetings of this committee shall be kept and the staff development plan shall be dated and signed by all committee members before being submitted to the district superintendent for his signature.

4. The plan shall specify information about planned training and support activities.

5. The plan shall specify the levels and types of administrative support to be provided to the staff development program.

6. The plan shall specify a method or methods to be used to evaluate the performance of each participant on each planned activity in order to determine successful completion of the staff development program.

CRITERIA FOR REVIEWING PLANS

Staff development plans will be reviewed on the basis of established criteria outlined below. Explanations, examples, and definitions of each component may be found in the technical assistance manual, Preparing A Comprehensive Staff Development Plan.

1. Goals and Objectives

   Personnel in school districts shall identify the mission of the district, what kinds of activities it will take to accomplish the district mission, and what kinds of behaviors must be demonstrated by staff in order for these activities to be successfully completed. These statements of desired district, school, and staff behavior become the goals and objectives of the district staff development plan.

2. Assessment of Needs

   The staff development program is to address those areas where the district has identified a need for improvement of performance in order to accomplish planned district goals. There must be a reason for selecting specific staff

development activities, and the district's selection of activities is to be based upon identified needs within the system. Responsibility for assessing staff development needs lies with the district staff development committee. Copies of needs assessment forms used in planning staff development activities and a summary report of needs assessment findings (or a statement of need for each training activity) shall be included in the comprehensive staff development plan. Information obtained from on-the-job performance assessments must be included in the district's plan for staff development each year.

3. Collaborative Structures

The district-level staff development committee must be appointed and charged with annually developing or reviewing the comprehensive staff development plan. It must be shown that all instructional and administrative personnel participate as partners in developing, implementing, evaluating, and revising the staff development program. Minutes of committee meetings and regular staff meetings in which staff development program needs and progress are reviewed shall be used to document collaborative structures.

4. Staff Reward System

Staff development programs must develop intrinsic reward systems which emphasize opportunities for improved professional competence, thus appealing to participants' sense of professionalism.

5. Program Implementation Strategies

a. Staff Training Activities

Staff training activities consist of specific instruction in acquiring skills or behaviors relevant to one's position, usually conducted in on-site workshops and training sessions. Staff training activities shall be developed to address identified needs as assessed by the district's staff development committee. Information gained through the district's performance assessment system must be used in developing training activities.

Areas of Staff Training

There are three areas in which training activities shall be conducted: professional knowledge (examples: superintendents and principals-administration; teachers-subject matter); professional skills (examples: principals-instructional leadership; teachers-effective teaching skills; support staff - planning alternative methods of instruction); school climate (examples: learning to work collaboratively, participating effectively in decision making, establishing a school level discipline system.)

Types and Credits of Staff Training Activities

Listed below are types of staff training activities that will be reviewed by the Commission on School Accreditation and credits to be attached to each respective type.

Receiving Instruction (1 credit per hour)

- attending school site workshops/training sessions* (maximum of 5 credits per activity)
- formally observing colleagues in similar positions (maximum of 2 credits per activity)
- videotaping and analyzing on-the-job performance (maximum of 3 credits per activity)

Giving Instruction (1 credit per hour of planning and/or delivery and/or follow-up)

- modeling/demonstrating effective job-related skills (maximum of 3 credits per activity)
- conducting workshops (maximum of 7 credits per workshop topic)
  -based on information received through attendance at off-site or on-site conferences, workshops, training sessions
  -based on information gained through personal expertise and/or research

Participants must accrue 13 credits through staff training activities. A maximum of 7 training credits may be accrued through giving instruction, and all training credits may be accrued through receiving instruction.

b. Staff Support Activities

Staff support activities are designed to help staff training participants assimilate the skills and information delivered in training sessions into their on-the job performance.

Types and Credits of Staff Support Activities

Listed below are types of staff support activities that will be reviewed by the Commission on School Accreditation. Participants accrue 1 credit for each hour of approved activity.

- approved staff meetings which focus upon interaction and provision of feedback regarding program and staff performance, district goals and objectives, and the content and rationale of staff development activities.
- developing or revising curriculum plans and/or materials.

Participants must accrue 13 credits through staff support activities. A maximum of 5 support credits may be accrued by an individual for independently developing or revising curriculum plans and/or materials, and all support credits may be accrued through approved staff meetings.

Minimum Credits Required

All certified staff in the district are to accumulate a minimum of twenty-six credits of staff development activities, thirteen credits of which must be earned through staff training activities and thirteen credits of which must be

*school site refers to an elementary or secondary school campus within the State of Mississippi

earned through staff support activities. All assistant teachers who have not previously held that position in the school district are to accumulate a minimum of twenty credits of staff development activities, ten credits of which must be earned through staff support activities. All other assistant teachers are to accumulate at least 10 credits of staff development activities annually, five credits of which must be earned through staff training and five credits of which must be earned through staff support activities. Mandated staff development activities shall be conducted during the district's formal contractual period, as specified in the employment contract. Training activities may be scheduled at the discretion of the district during the contract period. Support activities shall be conducted on at least a monthly basis and may be scheduled on a weekly basis.

6. Administrative Support for the Staff Development Program

District-level and building-level administrators and the district board of trustees shall demonstrate continuous backing and active support of the staff development program through these activities:

- approving school-level and district-level staff development plans;
- providing financial and physical program resources;
- providing released time for staff development activities;
- participating in training sessions;
- conducting staff development meetings;
- monitoring staff performance and organizational change;
- rewarding improved staff and organizational performance.

7. Successful Completion Criteria

For each approved staff development activity the district must implement a follow-through plan that includes the following components: Goal of Activity, Projected Outcome of Activity, Description of Activity, Assignment, and Follow-up of Assignment. Follow-through procedures used must coincide with those outlined by the State Department of Education for each type training activity.

For recertification purposes all certified staff, including full-time and part-time personnel, must meet the requirement of successful completion of 26 credits in the district staff development program each year. It is the responsibility of the district to offer a minimum of 30 credits in staff development activities (at least 15 training and 15 support); however, individual staff members are responsible for obtaining the required number of credits for purposes of recertification.

8. Program Evaluation Strategies

The staff development program shall be evaluated annually using several measures of program effectiveness, including, as a minimum, the following:

- participant reactions to training activities;
- evaluation of changes in organizational functioning which relates participation in specific staff development activities to changes in the overall level of performance of the district mission and the goals and objectives of the staff development program.

Participants shall be provided with feedback about their progress. The staff development plan shall specify the methods to be used to evaluate the program, including copies of any evaluation forms to be used, shall summarize the evaluation data collected during the previous year and shall indicate how evaluation information influenced current staff development planning.

9. Program Review and Revision

The results of program evaluations shall be used as the basis for revising the staff development program to reflect the mission and the ongoing performance needs of the district.

AMENDMENT PROCESS

Requests for amendment of staff development plans must be submitted on appropriate forms to the Commission on School Accreditation through the Bureau of School Improvement. The Commission will review all amendment requests and may approve those that it finds in keeping with the identified needs and goals of the district's staff development plan.